

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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January 22, 2019

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Madam Speaker:

On behalf of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, I first write to congratulate you on your historic election as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. I wish you well as you lead the House once again in the months and years to come. Our Caucus stands ready to help you deliver a better deal for the people and communities we represent in Congress.

In 1994, the Smithsonian Institution Task Force on Latino Issues issued a report on the lack of Latino representation within the Institution, which provided a series of ten recommendations for improvement. Nearly 24 years later, a report recently released by the UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative shows that the Smithsonian had failed to implement seven of the ten recommendations, calling into serious question their commitment to diversity and inclusion. While we strongly support the Smithsonian's Latino Center immense contributions to this endeavor, there is more to do to increase inclusion within the Smithsonian's workforce and leadership structure.

As Speaker, you will soon have the opportunity to nominate three members of Congress to serve on the Smithsonian Institution's Board of Regents. Among other critical matters, the Board is responsible for overseeing the stewardship and administration of the Smithsonian Institution. However, at this time, not one single representative of the 17-member Board is of Hispanic heritage. Thus, we strongly believe the Board fails to represent the rich diversity of our nation.

In the history of the Smithsonian's Board of Regents, only four Hispanic members have served as Regents. At nearly 58 million people, or 18 percent of the population, Hispanics represent the largest and fastest growing ethnic group in the United States. By 2060, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates our community will reach 119 million, or roughly 30 percent of the population. However, Hispanics continue to face vast underrepresentation in nearly every facet of American life. From the halls of Congress to academic and cultural institutions, the disparity could not be more striking. That is why we believe it is critical that a Hispanic Member of Congress serve in this role.



Towards that end, members of our Caucus would like to recommend Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard of California for appointment to the Smithsonian's Board of Regents. As a member of the

Congressional Arts Caucus, she has been a passionate advocate for diversity and inclusion among the arts and humanities. She will bring greater gender balance to the Board and represent our Caucus, the Hispanic community, and the U.S. House of Representatives well, if chosen to serve.

In addition to this historic appointment, I urge your support for House consideration of the National Museum of the American Latino Act. This legislation would establish a new Smithsonian museum on the National Mall to tell the rich story of the American Latino experience. This bipartisan legislation is a top priority for our Caucus and would be a giant step toward providing greater Hispanic representation among the arts and cultural institutions in our nation's capital.

We appreciate your full consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,


Joaquin Castro
Chairman